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AUTHOR Shere, Carla
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ABSTRACT

Many colleges and universities have designed summer transition programs for students entering their schools. The goal of these programs is to ease the transitional processes students encounter, and to enable the student to feel more acclimated to campus life. Summer transitional programs have been particularly important because they operate at a critical time when institutions could be effective in preventing student departure. Most often, the overall summer program objective is to maximize the retention, academic achievement, graduation, and educational development of underrepresented students who planned to enroll in the following fall semester. This study was conducted to examine the transitional Summer Enrichment Program (SEP) at the University of Delaware, focusing on issues of transition and adaptation of pre-first year students. The study examined Van Gennep's rites of passage theory in the context of how the SEP supported the transition process of students from high school to college. The study used participant observation, pre- and post-questionnaires, student journal entries, and selected student interviews. The findings revealed that students in general felt a high comfort level with the campus, were familiar with the campus, and felt integrated both academically and socially to the campus community after participating in the SEP. It appeared that the students in the SEP progressed through Van Gennep's rites of passage at their own pace with little difference with regard to ethnicity and gender. (NB)

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A PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION CASE STUDY USING VAN GENNEP'S RITES OF PASSAGE THEORY AT A "SUMMER TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM"

BY

CARLA SHERE, Ed.D

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INTRODUCTION

Boyer (1987, p. 8) stated that "the first important step in improving the undergraduate college is to help students move from school to higher education. The goal must be to provide more helpful information and make it possible for students to begin with confidence an educational journey that will lead them to the right college and extend far beyond the college years." Therefore, it is imperative for students to strive for a match between them and their choice of higher education, so the transitional process from high school to college will be smoother, leading to higher retention rates. Many institutions of higher education have designed summer transition programs for students entering colleges or universities. The goal of these programs is to ease the transitional processes students encounter, and to enable the student to feel more acclimated to campus life.

Summer transitional programs have been particularly important because they operate at a critical time when institutions could be effective in preventing student departure. This critical time for students is prior to their entry into the institution, when students separate themselves from past forms of associations and make the transition into the social and intellectual life of the institution (Tinto, 1987). Consequently, transition programs were designed by college and university administrators to assist individuals in overcoming the social and academic difficulties associated with making the transition into college. Most often, the overall summer program objective was to maximize the retention, academic achievement, graduation, and educational development of underrepresented students who planned to enroll in the following fall semester.

Because of changed college and university demographics, contemporary economic conditions, and the need to foster further student

development and success with regard to the transitional process, studying the concept of transitional programs is essential. In light of today's higher educational student population, the need to combine admission with retention is of special importance. When a student was recruited and matriculated into the institution, the admission officer often would never have contact with that student again, even though the admission officer was usually the first person a prospective student would meet from the institution, creating a bond that assisted in the formulation of that student's first impression of the institution. If admission and retention efforts were designed to work in tandem, it would benefit the students by better meeting their needs, particularly during the transitional process (Tinto, 1987).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to describe the events and occurrences during the transitional Summer Enrichment Program (SEP) at the University of Delaware, focusing on the issues of transition and adaptation of pre-first year students. In view of retention efforts on most campuses today, it was necessary to recognize the relationship between institutions and the incoming students, the wider social relations involved, and the historically constructed needs and competencies these students brought to the college experience. This study examines Van Gennep's rites of passage theory in the context of how the SEP supported the transition process of students from high school to college. The research questions for this study serve as a guide to explore the historical and current motivations for the establishment and continuance of the SEP at the University of Delaware, the students, and their rites of passages into the University of Delaware community via the SEP.

VAN GENNEP'S THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

A French anthropologist, Arnold Van Gennep, developed the highly acclaimed theory titled "rites of passage," which is the next theory to be examined. Van Gennep (1960/1909, p. 2) stated, "the life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another and from one occupation to another. Wherever there are fine distinctions among age or occupational groups, progression from one group to the next is accompanied by special acts— semicivilized this is in ceremonies— passing from one defined position to another which is equally defined". Freed and Freed (1980, p. 333) defined the transitional phases of the rites of passage as "a series of ceremonies, rituals, and/or events which are organized around the life cycle of an individual and provide a passage, essentially a transition from one status to another (or to a group)." Rites of passage participants included the individuals that made the transition, as well as their relatives and members of their communities. All were affected, and many persons organized, participated, and observed the rites (Freed and Freed, 1980). If the techniques and principles outlined for the rites of passage were followed, identical results would appear, regardless of what society was studied, or whether the data was secured directly in the field or if the facts were accurately observed by others (Chapple and Coons, 1942).

Rites of passage may be subdivided into three subcategories: rites of separation, transition rites, and rites of incorporation. These three subcategories are not developed to the same extent by all people or equally important to all people (Van Gennep, 1960/1909). In addition, ritual structure was characterized by the reduplication of the three phases of the entire ritual scheme within a particular phase. Whatever the details, the pattern of rites has remained the same; the pattern of the rites of passage (Leemon, 1972).

The first phase is the rite of separation, where there is either a marked reduction or a complete cessation of interaction between the individual and members of the group in which they had previously interacted (Leemon, 1972). When the researcher looked at the summer transitional students' arrival on campus, there was both a physical separation as well as a somewhat emotional separation from their previous environment. This signaled a change in their usual set of social relations. This change in social relations led to an increased rate of interaction in a new social system (students living on campus and participating in SEP) and a decreased rate of interaction among other systems (home environment and high school environment) where they had been interacting (Leemon, 1972). At this time there was the acquisition of a new status, that of a summer transitional student. As a summer transitional program participant, the student was not yet fully matriculated into the institution, but was still registered for classes, living on campus, etc.

Transitional rites are the second phase in the rites of passage. This phase is characterized by ambiguity. During this period, students interact within the new system (making new friends in the program, registering for classes, etc.) and become conditioned to their new status. This experience tests their capacity to adjust to higher education and teaches them the characteristics and idealized ways of life (both socially and academically) by focusing on daily activities.

In summer transitional programs, students are registered for courses, but are not fully matriculated until the summer transitional program is successfully completed. This phase is stressful because most participants became successfully incorporated and leave behind familiar relations and recognized patterns while exposing themselves to possible failure in a new position (Leemon, 1972).

The third phase, incorporation, is characterized by a series of rituals and ceremonies that symbolically express the new position and signal the resumption

of prior systems (Van Gennep, 1960/1909). For example, this could be a ceremony in which there is resumed interaction with members of the new community, such as successful completion of the summer transitional program and entering fall term as a fully matriculated student and member of the college/university community and feeling genuinely comfortable on campus. This phase marks the consummation of this passage: the student now has various clearly defined and structural rights and obligations.

As stated previously, the rites of passage consists of three phases. The duration and complexity of these phases differ depending on requirements of the systems. For instance, Individuals begin to interact within other institutions, enter new relationships, and change positions in relation to others frequently; including interactive changes within the entire system of relations (Chapple and Coon, 1942).

Freed and Freed (1980) stated that rites of passage ceremonies often contain a ritual language of symbols. These symbols contribute to the socialization and culturalization of individuals. These symbols must be translated in the context of the students' culture. Chapple and Coon (1942) have stated that the importance of symbols lies in the way they have contributed to the maintenance of conditioning of the individual in the new community. When students arrive on campus, they must learn the symbols that are used there. These include the names or nicknames of buildings, professors and courses, student activities, the registration process, and terms such as credits, hours, GPA's, etc.

OVERVIEW OF THE SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The focus of the Summer Enrichment Program at the University of Delaware was to provide students with the opportunity to obtain an early start with their college careers while developing and using effective study techniques

to help ensure strong academic performance. The program was an intensive five-week residential program offered to a limited number of incoming first year students who had been accepted to the University of Delaware and would benefit from academic support activities prior to their first semester. Participants began their University studies within a highly supportive and structured academic environment. Students took courses in mathematics and English, and participated in a variety of academic support and enrichment activities. They had the opportunity to meet new friends, become familiar with the campus, and learn about the University's services and activities.

Participants in SEP included three student groups. One group were the students from The John Henry Taylor Scholars Program (JHTS) which was designed specifically for African American and Hispanic students pursuing degrees in fields the of mathematics and science. The Office of Admissions selected the other two groups, one of which was called the summer qualifiers or parallel students. These students were selected because they were admitted to another University of Delaware campus (Wilmington campus, Southern campus, or the Georgetown campus) rather than the Newark campus. If a student participated and successfully completed the SEP (obtained at least a C in both classes), a student was given the opportunity to enter the Newark campus in the fall. This past summer, 355 summer qualifier students were invited to participate, 40 enrolled, and 34 successfully completed the program and entered the Newark campus in the fall. It should be noted that several of the 355 students were not interested in attending the Newark campus, but wanted to attend another campus. The third group of students invited to participate included a group that was labeled at risk (through a formula system) by the University.

The SEP staff included three groups: the SEP professional staff (Director of the Academic Services Center, who supervised the SEP Director, and three counselors), the SEP faculty, and the SEP resident assistance (RA) staff (eight upper class students). The faculty included five English professors, four math professors, two chemistry/calculus professors, and two SkilMod professors (one was the SEP Director and one was from student services).

METHODOLOGY

This study used participant observation, pre and post questionnaires, student journal entries, and selected student interviews, based on the works of Thomas L. Leemon and Arnold Van Gennep. The Leemon (1972) and Van Gennep (1960) studies used qualitative research to study subjects in their natural environment by means of participant observation; this study used the same method which is often used for field research. Observations coupled with field notes made it possible to record behaviors and events as they occurred.

This study focused on the 1992 SEP at the University of Delaware. Participant observation was used throughout the entire program, which lasted from Saturday, July 11th through Saturday, August 15th. Observation began during a three day training session prior to the students arrival, and covered the students' arrival on campus, all orientation activities, academic courses, planned and unplanned social events/activities, and closing ceremony procedures. Academic courses observed included a math and English class in the morning, and Supplemental Instruction and SkilMod classes in the afternoon. Classes and class levels were rotated weekly, so each class could be observed. The field notes were entered into a computer daily.

Three journal entries were requested from the students, each to be a page in length. They were to be turned into the researcher during the following periods: July 11th through July 18th, July 27th through August 3rd, and August

9th through August 15th. The students were free to write about a topic of their choosing, or they could write according to the guidelines the researcher provided. For the first journal the researcher suggested writing about being away from home, adjusting to their new environment, missing their family and friends, and what their immediate thoughts were. The second entry was to be written just after they had visited home, and the suggestions were to write about leaving the SEP for home, their weekend home, and returning to the SEP. The final entry asked about the program ending, how their finals were, grades, and what their feelings were.

A pre questionnaire was distributed to all SEP students during orientation on the second evening of their arrival. The post questionnaire was distributed on the last Friday of the program, after final examinations and was collected on the next day, before they were able to obtain their grades.

A questionnaire for faculty and staff was also designed to obtain their perceptions about the students and their transition patterns. The questionnaires were distributed to the faculty during their first faculty meeting, July 27th, and returned to the researcher at the second and final staff meeting on Monday, August 10th.

Approximately one third (21 students) of the SEP participants were interviewed twice by the researcher. These students were selected with regard to academic grouping, ethnicity, and gender, so that a representative sample would be interviewed. The first interviews were conducted during the second week of the SEP, while the second set of interviews occurred during the final week. The interview questions were also designed in accordance with Van Gennep's tripartite theory.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

In view of retention efforts on most campuses today, it is necessary to recognize the relationship between institutions and incoming students, the wider social relations involved, and the historically constructed needs and competencies that these students bring to the college experience. By actively participating as a participant observer in the Summer Enrichment Program, the researcher was able to describe the events and occurrences during the SEP, observe how students spent their time, observe what communicative interactions occurred, and study how participants journeyed through the rites of passage into higher education at the University of Delaware.

As Van Gennep noted, the durations of the phases differed relative to the people and situation. The separation phase was different for those students who were living close to home, and had regular family and friend contact than those that lived further away and did not. Depending on the individual, those that lived close to their families and friends may not have had regular contact with them. The separation phase signifies detachment. It was sometimes confusing, sad, and painful for these students. Many were leaving home for the first time and were wrestling with a variety of issues in several areas: the pressure of academics, missing people from home, social pressures of college, missing the familiarity of their home environment, and moving into the transition phase, which some moved into faster than others.

The way students spent their time, the relationships they made, and the academic changes were all indicators of transition. The transition phase was the most extensive for most of the SEP students. When students began to interact within their new system, the program and the campus, there were many changes for them as indicated by the presentation of the data. They were confused, were

met with a conundrum of emotions and feelings, and at the same time had such high expectations and a sense of wanting to be successful.

As students moved through the transition phase, they began to show signs of incorporation. For instance, in the post-questionnaire, an overwhelming number of students stated their expectations of the SEP had been met. With regard to ethnicity there were minimal differences, however when looking at gender, women were more likely to indicate that their original expectations were met. Although two thirds of the men said their expectations were met, one third said their expectations were not met. Blacks, Caucasians and Hispanics were generally more positive than Asian students relative to expectations being met, but gender was the same.

The incorporation phase of Van Gennep's rites of passage theory was noticeable in students as the Program came to an end. Although Van Gennep's theory stated that people move through the phases at different durations, with regard to the SEP students needed time in the transition phase before being incorporated into the campus community. Students for the most part generated a high comfort level of the campus, were familiar with the campus, and felt integrated both academically and socially to the campus community after participating in the SEP.

FINDINGS RELATED TO CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

The students who were enrolled in the SEP varied in terms of academics, culture, diversity, and social class. These differences did not impact significantly on this study or the ways in which students adapted to the environment, possibly supporting the idea that Van Gennep's theory is applicable to all rites of passage, regardless of culture, ethnicity, or gender. However, this may have been the result of the strict rules, which were enforced for all participants. For

example, even students who were John Henry Taylor Scholars were expected to study during the evening study hour periods. No student was permitted the luxury of a car on campus, and the campus climate was so casual and informal that material objects such as clothes became inconsequential, so that social class disparities became masked, creating a more equal society for participants within the SEP.

When looking at the transition of high school seniors into college, students moved through three stages, as predicted by Van Gennep's theory, at different durations and intensities. This was evidenced by the students' questionnaires, journal entries, interviews, and by examining the field notes. Fleming (1985) indicated that on predominantly White campuses, Black students were few in numbers, which limited their friendships/support systems and dating opportunities. In the SEP, clearly one third of the participants were Black, which probably accounted for the strong peer relationships and support systems the Black students often mentioned during the data collection. A few minority students did mention racism, but not within the context of applying to them at the SEP. They mentioned previous experiences with racism such as in high school and in their neighborhoods. Black students did use the term "self segregation" often and seemed comfortable using the term to describe why the program was segregated by gender and ethnicity. The Black students mentioned they "hung out" with the people they felt most comfortable. Fleming suggested that Black students enrolled at predominantly White institutions, thinking that racism would not exist, found that it did, and isolated themselves. Perhaps because of the critical mass of Black students who attended the SEP, these students felt more incorporated into the University, which explains why their comfort and integration levels were at such high percentages. Both Asians and Hispanics reported a slightly lower satisfaction rate, possibly because of their

lower enrollment percentages of 5% and 9%, respectively. When Black students entered the University of Delaware during the academic year, the percentages of students of color would be much lower (9%), and it could be more difficult for Blacks to become acclimated to the University. On the other hand, they may have created such strong relationships and networks that their satisfaction levels would remain high, or they may also be more confident due to their successful transition.

Chew and Ogi (1987) presented recommendations on how Asian students could become more acclimated to the university. Two of their suggestions included promoting family participation and indoctrinating Asian role models. Asian students were the second most likely ethnic group to spend time with their families before attending the SEP and they were the least positive (25%) when indicating their initial feelings of the program. If family participation were promoted, and at the same time independence encouraged, these students may have felt more positive about the program initially. Caucasian and Hispanic students both indicated they spent more time with their friends than their families before attending SEP so the transition into a college environment that encouraged interaction with peers was probably more comfortable for them, and resulted in their slightly higher rate of positive feelings.

The literature has stated that ethnic groups need ethnic minorities as role models. Because there were no Hispanics on the staff or in the faculty, Hispanics may have been less likely to seek assistance from the program staff.

It was essential to create a positive environment for students if they were to be effectively supported during the transition into college. An overwhelming number of students reported that their expectations had been met by the program. Eighty-two percent indicated they were familiar and comfortable with the campus, while only six percent of the responses were negative with regard to

familiarity. It should be noted the six percent that responded negatively indicated either "did not make it onto main campus" or "extremely high expectations for familiarity", such as knowing all the buildings.

FINDINGS RELATED TO VAN GENNEP'S "RITES OF PASSAGE" THEORY

Van Gennep's tripartite theory was composed of the following phases: separation, transition, and incorporation. These phases were not always equally important or equally elaborated upon for each individual. Chapple and Coons (1942) and Van Gennep have both stated that identical results would appear regardless of what society was studied. In most cases ethnicity and gender were not a factor when examining the tripartite theory in the realm of the SEP and how students transition from high school to higher education. Students of color generally did not transition differently than White students in this particular study. There were generally no significant transitional differences between males and females.

As the SEP was examined, it seemed that all the students experienced the separation and transition phases; however, as Van Gennep suggested, this occurred at a different pace for each individual. The separation phase began as the students were brought to campus the first day of the program. As Turner suggested (1969), this was a symbolic behavior that signified the detachment of the students from their previous set of cultural conditions/home environment. At this time there was a marked reduction or complete cessation of interaction between the individual and members of the group which they had previously interacted. Parents were also showing signs of visibly separating; this was one of the first indications to them that their children were now moving into adulthood.

Students would mention talking to their parents every few days or once a week rather than daily. As Van Gennep (1960) stated, the separation affected others in the community, not just the person actively involved in the rites of passage. Other students would indicate that "you could tell who your real friends from home were because they kept in contact with you".

The immediate feelings of the majority of students were negative or indifferent. The majority of students had a difficult time separating initially, so it was not surprising to find negative feelings early in the program. When students were asked if and how their relationships with their family and friends from home would change, only 9% reported there would be less contact, and 51% indicated their relationships would not change; however, when asked at the end of the program, 34% indicated they had less contact with family and friends, while no student felt their family relationships were the same, and 53% said their friendships were the same. This indicated that the separation phase was present for all students.

Students' journals mentioned adjusting to a new environment, and compared their past environment to the new environment. Comparisons included dining hall meals versus home cooked meals, sharing a room versus having their own room, being responsible for laundry, cleaning, etc. versus having someone else be responsible, friends in the program versus friends at home, and studying at the program versus not studying at home. Some students were initially homesick as they separated from friends, more so than family in most cases.

The transition phase was the most significant phase for all students. Turner (1969) stated one passes through a cultural realm where few or none of the attributes from the past or coming state exist. New structures and processes emerge while students interacted within their new system/environment and

became conditioned to their new status. This phase was also characterized by ambiguity. Students had left home, yet were not fully matriculated students until after the program was completed. The students had very few of the attributes from the past; for instance, they were not around their family and/or friends who they were used to seeing daily, they lived in a new environment where 75 people shared living space rather than a handful of people, and their structure with regard to academics and school was completely different. Most students stated they had never studied as they had studied during the program, and most stated the pace was extremely swift compared to what they encountered in high school.

However, the SEP had few of the attributes that would appear during the academic year in the fall, as they were not yet enrolled and matriculated into the University. The students would not be in such an academically regimented program in the fall, pursuing their coursework at the pace they were in SEP. They would not receive the assistance from the RA/tutors they were now receiving, nor would they likely have the same personal attention from all their professors as a matriculated student. The mandatory study hours that were established, coupled with strict rules such as curfew, visitation hours, and drug and alcohol policies would not be in effect during the fall. The courses were selected for the students, where matriculated students would select their own courses, with some guidance. Counseling, both group and individual, was mandatory, while during the fall, the students would have to seek counseling.

Students became conditioned to their new environment and interacted within it. When students were asked how much free time they spent off campus, the majority said they did not go off campus. Half indicated they spent most of their free time with people in the program. Perhaps because students were staying on campus, they also indicated their relationships with those affiliated

with SEP had become more positive. They were becoming incorporated into both the University and those who comprised the University environment. They often indicated through interviews and journals that they had become extremely close to their roommate, and several requested living together during the academic year.

The transitional phase was also characterized by ambiguousness. The students kept comparing their summer experience to their fall experience. Some of the comparisons included the small number of people on campus compared to the large number of people in the fall, the number of Black students in SEP compared to the number of Black students in the total University enrollment in the fall, and the rules during SEP compared to not having the rules in the fall. The students often indicated the SEP experience was not a realistic college experience for them in comparison to the fall. They felt ambiguity because they were living on campus and taking college level courses, but were not yet matriculated. They were not really sure what kind of student they were. Having mixed emotions on several occasions left the students feeling ambivilant. For example, they were happy to go home for the weekend but they were sad to leave the program.

Incorporation, the third phase, was characterized by a series of rituals and ceremonies that symbolically expressed their new position, and signaled the resumption of the prior systems. There were some activities where the students began to sense incorporation, such as the evening of the Three Little Bakers dinner theatre, when the students had their group picture taken. All the preparations leading to the dinner theatre, such as trying on clothes, were also signs. However, the first sign of a ritual that symbolically expressed the students' new position was when the students took their last final examination. It symbolized the end of SEP and the beginning of their college career. The

talent show/party was a second ritual which was a collaborative effort among the students and one of the last times they would all be together. The third ritual was the closing ceremony, when awards were given and certificates were presented. It was a time when students experienced something tangible which indicated they were successfully admitted to the University. There was an elaborate program which described the morning events for them to keep, and a slide show which outlined the program from beginning to end. The fourth ritual was students receiving their grades after the closing ceremony. Some were happy, others were visibly upset, not only because they did not "make it on to main campus," but because they had expected their grades to be better.

The incorporation phase marked that the passage was consummated and in a stable state. The SEP was over, and the ambiguousness had ended. The students knew they were either matriculated students or they were not. The incorporation phase was not reached by all students. As the questionnaire results have indicated, most students felt integrated and comfortable in the University, and many of the parallel students made it onto the main campus; however, there were seven students who did not make the transition to the Newark campus and 6% of the students did not feel a part of the University community.

During this phase, students were expected to behave in accordance with customary norms and ethical standards and to assume a social position in the new system. Many of the students had their residence hall assignments and knew the moving procedures, what to bring to campus, how to use their meal card and where the residence halls and dining halls were located. They would be familiar with the campus both physically and socially, and they would already have a core group of friends formed.

The SEP supported Tinto's model of integrating students into campus life to increase retention by using this model for the SEP framework. The SEP professional staff coordinated events which marked the three phases: separation was symbolized by moving in the residence halls and orientation; transition was marked by counseling sessions and the strict rules; and incorporation was symbolized by the talent show/party and the closing ceremony.

The students were beginning to see themselves as University of Delaware students by interacting with their peers and beginning to act as members of their new community. As they changed during the program they became more incorporated into the University. Their language, the usage of terms such as west campus, student ID, and going to the dining halls all indicated they felt a sense of belonging and were behaving in accordance with customary norms of the University. This was evidenced at the high percentage of students who felt integrated and comfortable on the campus.

The students in the SEP progressed through Van Gennep's rites of passage at their own pace with little difference with regard to ethnicity and gender. For those students who advanced through the incorporation phase, the University of Delaware awaited them in the fall. Students could enroll through graduation or they could drop out. When they graduate, students will go through the rites of passage again, because it is a continual process.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The transitional processes students go through when they separate from their high school/home environment and enter college are immense. The transitional program at The University of Delaware was instrumental in easing the transition into higher education, increasing positive feelings the students had about the environment, and providing a sense of incorporation in the campus

community, all of which should increase student retention. Based on the success of this program, more campuses should design transitional programs, that follow the tripartite framework.

Transitional programs should also design and implement a multiculturalism and/or diversity component. Many students arrive on campus with a lack of awareness concerning diversity issues. This would provide a foundation about multiculturalism as they enter the campus as first year students.

Evaluation by administrators is essential in justifying transitional programs, particularly with regard to funding and staff. Retention records need to be copious and up to date; they must indicate the progress of each student and graduation rates, so that student outcomes can be readily accessible.

Bridging the gap between admissions and retention/student services is important in assisting in the facilitation of the transitional process for students. Both of these areas of student affairs should consider possibilities for better incorporation of a more cooperative goal/mission with regard to their respective job responsibilities. Professional organizations such as the National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and Association of College Personnel Administrators (ACPA) can begin by fostering both conversations and funding for further research.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

To further emphasize the benefits of transitional programs to students, a continued study following these same SEP students through their years at the University of Delaware, and preferably after graduation, is necessary to examine

attrition and retention trends. Longitudinal studies of other transitional programs would also be beneficial.

Transitional programs may be designed with a number of target student populations, including regularly admitted students, minority students, students who are not regularly admissible to the university, high achievers, and those in specific disciplines. Studies of transitional programs should be replicated on different campuses, including historically Black campuses, state institutions, small liberal arts colleges, and research universities. Are these programs different or similar? Are the results different or similar? What differences and similarities are there once students are on campus? In studying different groups of students and comparing different transitional programs, results from one group may or may not be applicable to another group.

Important questions include: "What element of the program assisted with your survival on campus?" and "What could the program do to better prepare students for the higher education experience?". Exit interviews may be conducted to determine why students who completed transitional programs may drop out of college later. Further research may look into particular ethnic perspectives, with findings analyzed, and recommendations implemented on campuses.

To better understand transitional processes, college administrators working with transitional programs should be familiar with the theory and framework of Van Gennep's study, and how the tripartite theory relates to college students. Van Gennep's theory is applicable to several ritual schemes. The tripartite theory is generalizable because the phases take place in both systems and subsystems. The tripartite theory can be viewed via a transitional program or a student's college tenure. If developmental programming efforts are examined through this schema, transition phases could be more easily understood.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The SEP professional staff is familiar with Tinto's work and incorporates this model into their daily activities; however, when dealing with a diverse group of students it is imperative to implement theories which are not ethnic or gender specific. Van Gennep's theory is applicable for either males or females and for any ethnic group to be studied.

One of the primary questions for the SEP is the effectiveness and appropriateness of each of its services. For instance, Hispanic students did not use program staff and faculty as often as other ethnic groups when they had concerns and/or worries during the program. The under utilization of program staff for Hispanic students could be related to the under-representation of Hispanic faculty, RAs, or SEP staff. As the program continues to diversify, ethnic issues will need to be examined in greater detail, and programming efforts will need to be appropriate and effective. Self segregation by gender and ethnicity continued throughout the program and tensions heightened among the students, but this was not addressed by the SEP professional staff in an appropriate and effective manner. The evaluations students complete could be helpful in denoting what changes the program could incorporate for the next year. These evaluations may be analyzed and improvements implemented for the SEP next year.

The diversity of the participants will need to be reflected throughout the program by the SEP staff. The residence staff, including the researcher (11 total), were White with the exception of a Black RA/tutor and Hall Director. This did not reflect the make-up of the student population. Both the SEP staff and the

faculty included two instructors who were not White. The minority statistics may need to be increased to reflect the student participants.

When studying diversity, the academic environment needs to be examined. In English courses, this includes which topics were covered for research papers, which books were assigned and what was fostered in class discussions. Field notes indicated the movie "Do the Right Thing" was shown in one class, and another class had a variety of diverse books students could select, read, and share with the class. Guest lecturers need to discuss topics such as racism, sexual orientation, etc.

With regard to diversity and ethnicity, the Black students in particular experienced a high comfort level within the University by attending the SEP. They felt acclimated to the University and often stated they had strong peer group support. Minority students need both role models and their own strong peer support group. This may not be as easy to find during the academic year. These students should be encouraged to continue their SEP support group and be made aware of the ethnic percentages on campus during the academic year.

Another suggestion for a diversity exchange is the introduction to what is available for special populations on campus and/or in the community. For example, providing a tour of the Black Culture Center to all SEP students or having someone from the gay and lesbian student group talk with students may help. Students need to be aware of these organizations for two reasons: they could provide support for students who will affiliate with these organizations and they teach the need for tolerance and awareness of other students who are unlike themselves.

Racial issues that arise on campus, particularly in the SEP, need to be addressed early. The students noticed racial tension (as evidenced by their journals, interviews, and questionnaires) and did not know how to effectively

handle it. The staff needs to be prepared to respond to racial tensions and to provide the appropriate interventions. Not all interventions are socially oriented; academic interventions also need to be considered.

The students need to be encouraged strongly, perhaps making it mandatory that they continue contact with the SEP office during the year. Most of these students need to use tutoring, the writing skills center, and other student support services during the year. As stated in the faculty, staff, and RA questionnaire, SEP students are not viewed differently than students during the academic year, so encouraging them to use student support services during SEP may increase their usage during the academic year. Student services should become a part of their life while attending the University of Delaware.

The use of the SEP as a retention tool requires a commitment from the university, not just from the Academic Services Center. Faculty should encourage students to take advantage of student services throughout the academic year. They should design a diverse curriculum, and refer students to the appropriate services when warranted. The Academic Services Center should also make appropriate referrals and recommendations when necessary.

This study has shown how transitional theory is necessary to understand the separation processes, transitional processes, and incorporation processes which students progress through as they enter college. Summer transitional programs such as the SEP at the University of Delaware are effective in assisting the transitional processes of high school seniors into college; however, they can be made more effective, particularly for students who are in under-represented groups. This is an area of student services that is becoming vitally important as the demographics of America change. It is our responsibility as educators to ensure access and quality for all students by using transitional programs as an effective means of recruitment and retention into higher education.

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